

[Managed] Pollinator Protection Plans [M]P3 –the EPA Strategy

Thomas Steeger, Ph.D.

Environmental Fate and Effects Division

EPA Office of Pesticide Programs

AAPCO Questions

- How is EPA going to use the information collected in the national assessment to inform decisions?
 - If you do not currently know, do you have a timeframe on when you might know?
 - Are there other questions that AAPCO may consider asking in the survey that would be of value to EPA, and perhaps lead to more informed decision making?
- How will EPA use the survey information in response to the 2019 EPA Office of Inspector General Report, Report No. 19-P-0275?

AAPCO Questions

- SLA, tribes and territories have strongly responded to the need to protect pollinator and promote pollinator health. Will there be any financial resources available for entities who include pollinator efforts as one of their Grantee Pick-List Program Areas with the FIFRA Cooperative [Grant] agreement?

EPA Responses

- In August 2019, the EPA Office of Inspector General released report *“EPA Needs to Determine Strategies and Level of [Their] Support for Overseeing State Managed Protection Plans [19-P-0275]”*.
- Report contained five recommendations
 - Develop and implement a strategy to use MP3 survey data to measure national impact of MP3;
 - Determine, using the survey data, how EPA will assist states with implementing their MP3;
 - Using survey data, fully communicate to states what MP3 implementation assistance is available from EPA and how it will be provided;
 - Determine whether and how EPA will help states address additional concern (*e.g.*, chronic risks and other limitations) through MP3; and,
 - Determine how EPA can use the MP3 to advance National Program Manager Guidance goals and its regulatory mission.

EPA Responses

- EPA accepted all of the OIG recommendations and provided time lines with which each recommendation would be addressed; and,
- In February 2020, EPA provided OIG with a strategy to measure national impact of MP3s.

Strategy

- In order to evaluate the broad impact (*i.e.*, national level) of plans on managed pollinators, it is necessary to first establish a baseline from which future survey data will be compared.
- Results from the initial year (2019) of the survey will serve as that baseline with which to highlight outcomes/changes in responses to future surveys and to identify potential opportunities to enhance the direction and effectiveness of MP3s.
- The survey data serve as one line of evidence with which OPP will assess the national impact of efforts to mitigate potential exposure of pollinators to pesticides.

Strategy

- Other lines of evidence include data from:
 - Bee Informed Partnership (BIP) Loss & Management Survey;
 - U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) surveys;
 - USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Honey Bee Pest and Disease survey; and,
 - bee kill incident data reported to OPP.
- OPP formed a workgroup to evaluate this information and provide recommendations.
- In terms of implementation of the strategy, the initial AAPCO survey year has been completed; AAPCO has agreed to administer the survey biennially.

Strategy

- Preliminary outcomes of the survey results help to address MP3 development (*e.g.*, stakeholder involvement) and primary focus areas of plans (*e.g.*, efforts to increase communication between stakeholders and outreach/training).
- While the first year's data serve as a baseline, they provide a means for OPP and States to track specific indicators of success in the coming years.
- The survey data reflect in large part voluntary efforts; however, the Agency also recognizes that the most effective means of reducing exposure to pesticides and for addressing other factors associated with declines in bee health are likely to involve effective [voluntary] communication, cooperation and collaboration between stakeholders at the local level.

Strategy

- Funding for MP3s has been and remains available to states that choose pollinator protection as a pick-list program area as identified in the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide (FIFRA) Cooperative Agreement Guidance.
 - According to the initial survey results, less than half of the states have chosen this option in 2018-2021.
- OCSPP will use the information provided from the AAPCO/SFIREG survey to revise applicable National Program Managers Guidance (NPMG) by June 2021 (*i.e.*, the next available opportunity in the cycle of NPMG planning).
- Similar to the states, tribes, and territories, EPA is committed to protecting pollinators and promoting pollinator health and serves as a resource to those interested in expanding the scope of MP3s to be more inclusive of stakeholder concerns.

Questions?